



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Vandenberg to Launch Nuclear-Capable Missile**

**SANTA BARBARA, CA** – On June 22, 2011, the United States plans to launch a Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. The missile will carry one “unarmed” warhead to a predetermined target in the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The last test of a Minuteman III took place in September 2010. Each test costs tens of millions of dollars.

According to Col. David Bliesner, the mission director, “Minuteman III test launches demonstrate our nation’s ICBM capability in a very visible way, deterring potential adversaries while reassuring allies.”

David Krieger, President of the Santa Barbara-based Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, agrees that the launch is a highly visible demonstration of U.S. nuclear capabilities. Krieger stated, “The launch demonstrates that, in spite of proclamations by the Obama administration of the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world, the United States is sending a clear and expensive message that it continues to be reliant on nuclear weapons.”

Krieger further stated, “When any country tests long-range missiles and nuclear weapons, it is more than just a test. It is a message to the world and perhaps to specific countries; it says in effect, ‘this is what we can do to you.’ If the U.S. wants to lead the way to a world free of nuclear weapons, as President Obama claims, it needs to stop sending such provocative messages. In the U.S. we are very aware of such messages when other countries test. We seem to have a blind spot in our thinking, however, about our own tests.”

Krieger also criticized the U.S. and Russia for keeping thousands of nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert. He said, “Despite the overwhelming logic of de-alerting our nuclear arsenals after the Cold War, the U.S. and Russia keep 1,000 nuclear weapons each on hair-trigger alert.” The majority of U.S. nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert are attached to Minuteman III ICBMs.

This scheduled test will take place three days before Nuclear Abolition Day on June 25, when people around the world will engage in actions aimed at building momentum for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

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**The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation** -- The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's mission is to educate and advocate for peace and a world free of nuclear weapons and to empower peace leaders. Founded in 1982, the Foundation is comprised of individuals and organizations worldwide who realize the imperative for peace in the Nuclear Age. The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is a non-partisan, non-profit organization with consultative status to the United Nations. For more information, visit [www.wagingpeace.org](http://www.wagingpeace.org).